

## **Attachment A.1**

### **Chronology of Selected Program Changes**

- FY 1993 - The department began its welfare reform initiative with the Governor's Welfare Reform Task Force formed in June 1993.
- FY 1994 - The Nebraska Legislature passed LB 1224, the Welfare Reform Act, in April 1994. This legislation directed the department to apply for federal waivers and formally begin the welfare reform initiative.
- FY 1995 - Upon gaining approval of federal waivers, the department continued the reform process by gaining legislative approval. The Nebraska Legislature passed LB 455 in April 1995, thereby amending the original Welfare Reform Act, and directing the department to implement the policies.
- FY 1996 - Nebraska implemented the state welfare reform project Employment First on November 1, 1995, in five counties (Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, Webster and one-half of Lancaster cases). The Lancaster county local office was equally divided randomly to form treatment and control groups for study. Employment First restructured the ADC policies towards families, such that families could achieve economic independence within a maximum of two years within a four-year period. To achieve this goal, many of the eligibility rules were changed to allow families to hold more resources, retain more earnings and receive child care and other supportive services. In exchange, employable adults in ADC families were to participate fully in either finding employment or attending training and education for employment.
- FY 1997 - Federal welfare reform officially began on August 22, 1996, with the signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). Under this legislation, the federal government made sweeping policy and funding changes in areas such as ADC, Child Care, JOBS, Food Stamps, Supplement Security Income (SSI), Child Support Enforcement, and Emergency Assistance programs. The funding streams for ADC, EA and JOBS are now combined and funded by the TANF block grant. The new legislation gave Nebraska increased flexibility in its application of welfare services through a block grant. For receipt of this block grant, the state had to meet various requirements. ADC cash assistance recipients must meet a set of work participation requirements for all families and another set for two-parent families. Single-parent families must participate in federally defined work activities for at least 30 hours per week; two-parent families must participate a minimum combined number of 55 hours per week between both adults. The state must also continue its historical share of welfare funding through a prescribed "maintenance-of-effort". On October 1, 1996, Nebraska submitted its plan for implementation of the provisions for the TANF program. Initiating the funding under TANF, Nebraska's plan was determined to be complete on December 1, 1996.
- FY 1998 - Nebraska implements Employment First statewide, with some amendments, on October 1, 1997. Changes in the treatment of earned income, resources, participation requirements were adjusted to make the program easier to administer and more effective for recipients (see page 4).
- FY 2000 - After discontinuing a research impact study contracted through Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., Nebraska began a client barrier study with Mathematica as a less invasive study of single women with children on assistance and their barriers to achieving economic independence.